

Message Text

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53

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9892

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

UNCLAS PRETORIA 2177

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, MARR, SF, UK

SUBJECT: SAG'S RESPONSE TO HMG'S CESSATION OF WASP
HELICOPTER SALES TO SOUTH AFRICA

1. SOUTH AFRICA'S MINDEFENSE P. W. BOTHA HAS RESPONDED TO NEWS FROM LONDON OF PRIME MINISTER HAROLD WILSON'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE LAST OF SEVEN WESTLAND WASP HELICOPTERS WHICH SOUTH AFRICA PURCHASED FROM BRITAIN WILL NOT BE DELIVERED. BOTHA NOTED THAT IN SPITE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, BRITAIN AND SOUTH AFRICA HAD MAINTAINED GOOD RELATIONS. THIS WAS ESPECIALLY TRUE WITH REGARD TO RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRITISH AND SOUTH AFRICAN NAVIES.

2. BOTHA THEN WENT ON TO SAY, "APPARENTLY MR. WILSON WANTS TO DESTROY THIS ALSO WHILE CONTINUING TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF THE SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT." BOTHA ADDED THAT SOUTH AFRICA WOULD HAVE TO "CONSIDER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WHETHER, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WHERE BRITAIN DOES NOT FULFILL HER OBLIGATIONS, SHE CAN CONTINUE TO DEMAND PRIVILEGES UNILATERALLY."

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